

FANTASTIC FRIENDSHIP

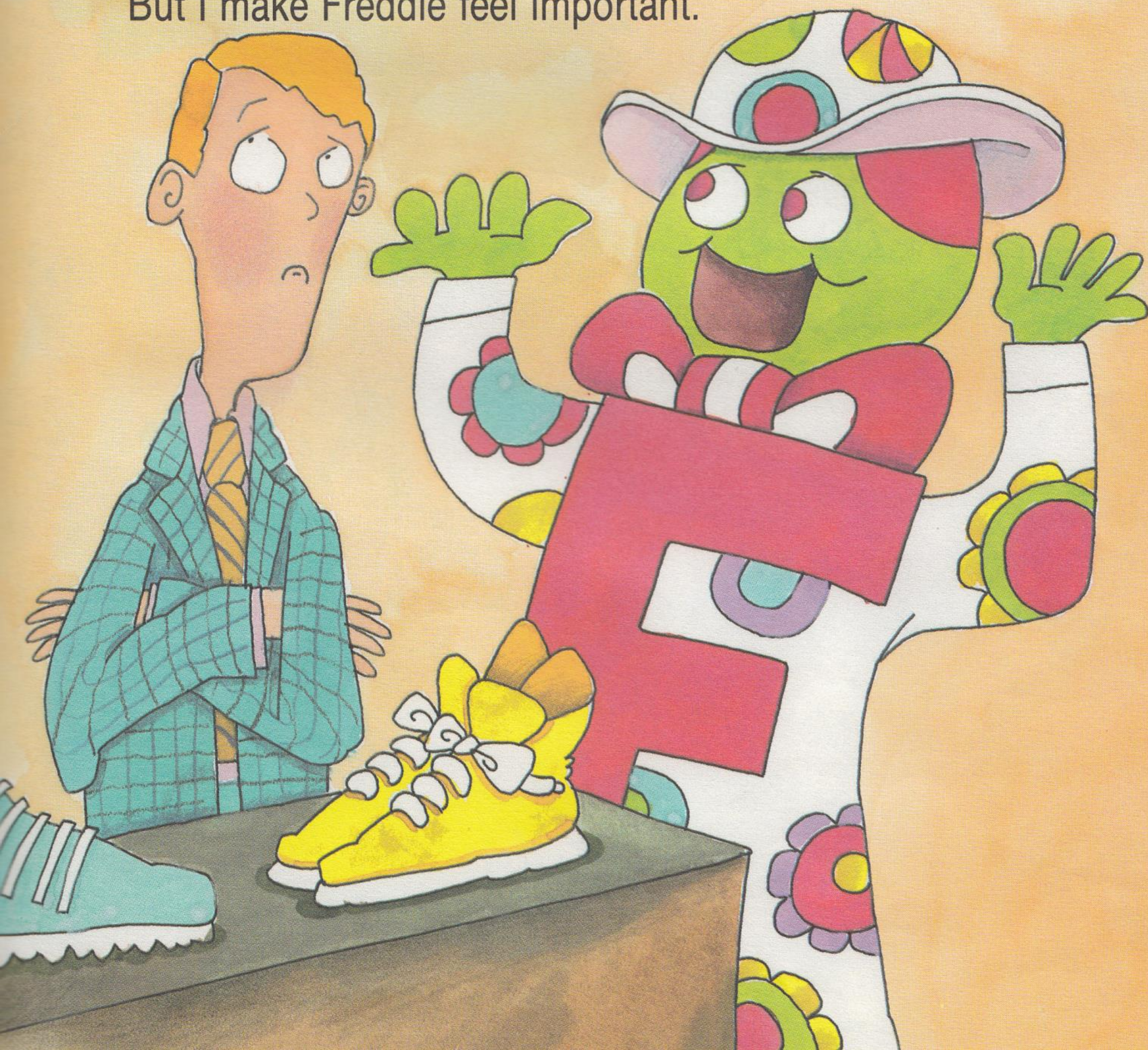


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Freddie's Fantastic Footwear Shop is Mr. F's favorite shop.

Every day Mr. F visits Freddie and asks him question after question about footwear.

"I never buy footwear from Freddie," says Mr. F, "because my funny feet are fantastic without footwear. But I make Freddie feel important."



“Mr. F, how do you make Freddie feel important?”
asks a friend.

“Every day I ask Freddie question after question
about footwear,” says Mr. F.

“How do questions make Freddie feel important?”
asks his friend.

“I heard someone say Freddie feels important
when he can answer questions,” says Mr. F.

“Does Freddie know why you ask him questions?”
asks Mr. F’s friend.

“Oh, no!” says Mr. F.



One day Freddie tells Mr. F he is closing the Fantastic Footwear Shop.

“The large shops can sell footwear for less money than I can,” explains Freddie.

“Where will you work?” asks Mr. F.

“I start working at Fern’s Fine Flower Shop on Friday,” says Freddie.

“Friday is only a few days from today,” says Mr. F.

“I must rush to the library.

I don’t have much time to learn about flowers.”

“Why does Mr. F have to learn about flowers?” wonders Freddie.



Mr. F rushes into the library.

“May I please borrow books about flowers?”
he asks the librarian.

“I have to learn about flowers very fast.”

“Why?” asks the librarian.

“I have to make Freddie feel important,” says Mr. F.

“I used to ask Freddie questions about footwear.

Now Freddie is going to work in a flower shop.

I will have to ask him questions about flowers.

Answering questions makes Freddie feel important.”

“I don’t understand,” says the librarian,

“but you may borrow as many books as you need.”



On Friday, Mr. F finds Freddie in Fern's Fine Flower Shop.

"Mr. F, please go away," says Freddie.

"You cannot ask me questions about footwear anymore."

"I can ask you about flowers," smiles Mr. F. Mr. F asks Freddie question after question about flowers.

Finally Freddie says, "Mr. F, you have been asking me questions for fifty-five minutes.

I will not answer one more question."

"You must feel important enough for today," smiles Mr. F.

"What do you mean?" asks Freddie.

"Never mind, I'll be back tomorrow," says Mr. F.



That evening, Freddie decides he must stop Mr. F from asking him questions.

“I cannot hurt Mr. F’s feelings,” thinks Freddie,
“but I can make sure Mr. F will not find me.
First I’ll disguise myself.”

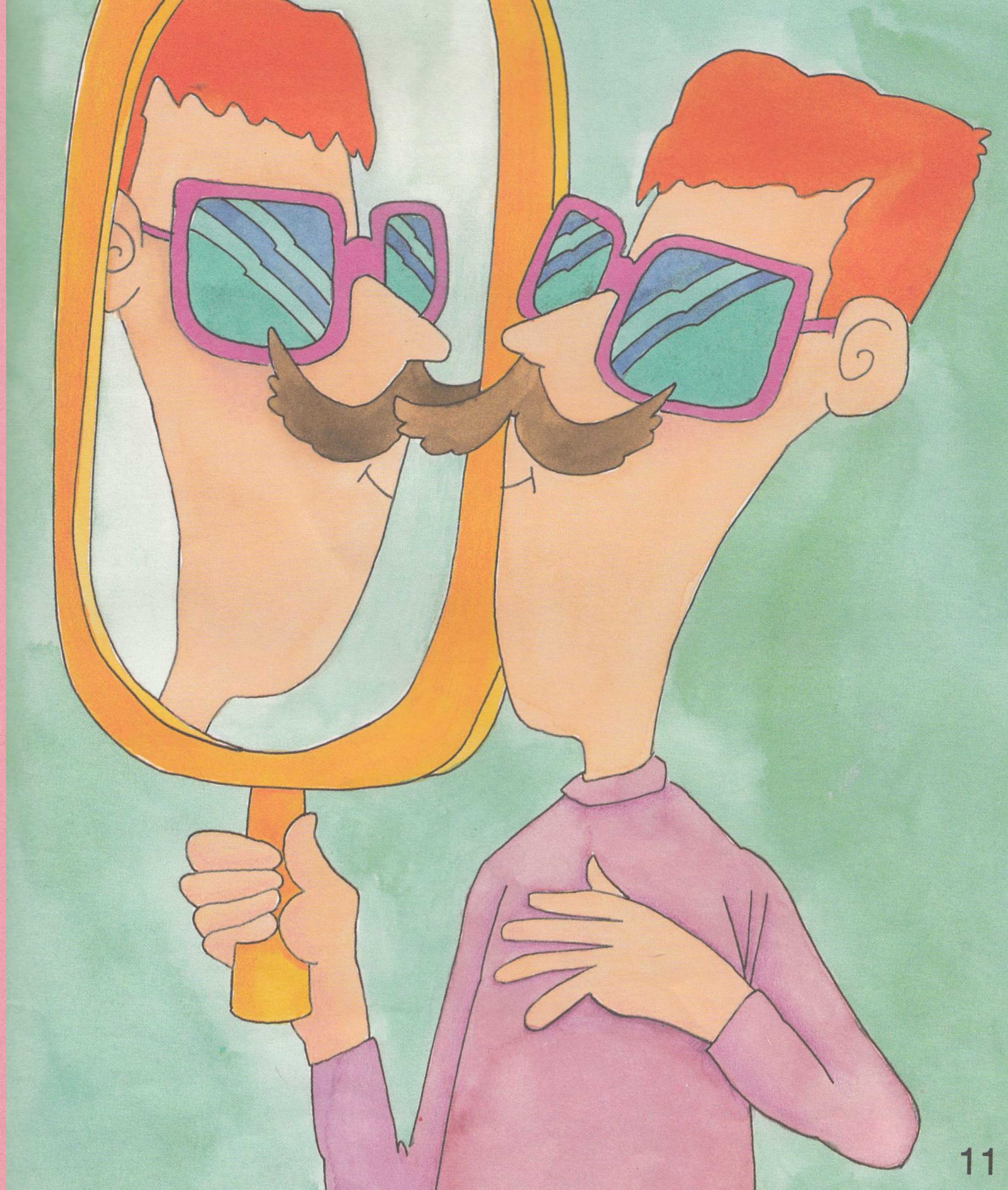
Freddie dyes his hair red.

Then he puts on a fake mustache and sunglasses.

He looks at himself in the mirror.

“Mr. F will not know who I am,” he says.

“Now I’ll find a job in another shop.”



The following day Mr. F looks for Freddie in Fern's Fine Flower Shop.

"Freddie does not work here anymore," says Fern.

Mr. F looks for Freddie in shop after shop.

Finally he goes into Fina's Fabulous Fish Shop.

Mr. F recognizes Freddie even though he has red hair, a mustache, and sunglasses.

However, Mr. F rushes away without talking to Freddie.

"Mr. F did not know me," thinks Freddie.

"I fooled him.

This time he won't be able to ask me questions."



Once again, Mr. F rushes into the library.
“Do you want more books about flowers?”
asks the librarian.
“No, thank you,” says Mr. F.
“Freddie changed jobs again.
First I had to learn about footwear, then flowers,
and now fish.
It is not easy for me to make Freddie feel important.”
“Freddie is fortunate to have a friend who cares
for him so much,” says the librarian.
Mr. F finds books about fish.
He studies them for a few hours.
Then he hurries to Fina’s Fabulous Fish Shop.



“Hello, Freddie,” says Mr. F, “I am ready to ask you questions about fish.
It is late, but I will stay here until you feel important.”
“What do you mean?” asks Freddie.
“Never mind,” smiles Mr. F.
“First I’ll ask you questions about flying fish.
Then I’ll ask you questions about . . .”
Before Mr. F finishes speaking,
Freddie runs out of the shop.
“Why did Freddie rush away?” asks Fina.
“Freddie keeps changing jobs,” says Mr. F.
“He probably misses footwear.
I have a plan to make Freddie feel happy again.”



The following day Mr. F tells his plan to the mayor.
“I want to reopen the carnival,” explains Mr. F.
“It will take a lot of work to reopen the carnival,” says the mayor.
“I will do all the work,” says Mr. F.
“The carnival I am planning will make my friend Freddie feel happy.”
“Freddie is fortunate to have you for a friend,” says the mayor.
“I will ask people to help you whenever they can spare a few hours.”
“Please be sure no one tells Freddie the carnival will be for him,” says Mr. F.



Day after day Mr. F works long hours at the carnival.
Each day different people help Mr. F.
Finally, after five months, all the work is finished.
Mr. F invites everyone who worked at the carnival
to come to the opening with their families and friends.
Then Mr. F telephones Freddie.
“Freddie, I have not seen you for five months,”
says Mr. F.
“Will you come to the carnival opening on Friday?”
“I’ll meet you at the carnival entrance
at four o’clock,” says Freddie.



On Friday Mr. F waits for Freddie
at the carnival entrance.

Freddie arrives at four o'clock.

"Read the carnival sign, Freddie," says Mr. F.

"The sign says Freddie's Fantastic Footwear Carnival,"
says Freddie.

"What does it mean?"

"This is your carnival," smiles Mr. F.

"Mine!" exclaims Freddie.

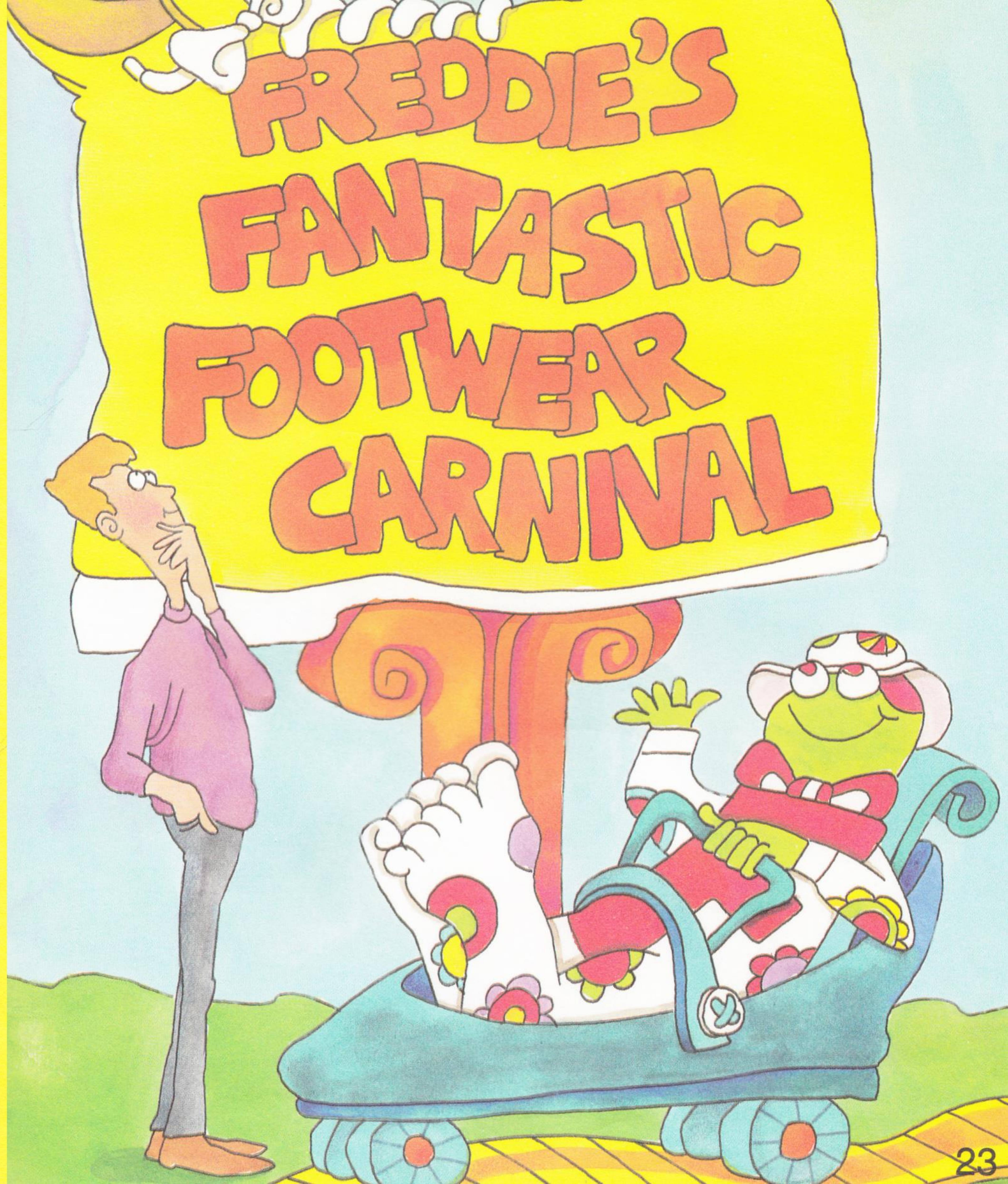
"Yes, look at this footwear car-go-round," says Mr. F.

"It's fantastic!" cries Freddie.

"Children can go round and round sitting in cars
shaped like footwear.

Who thought of this?"

"All your friends," says Mr. F.



“Hurry, Freddie,” calls Mr. F happily,
“look at the footwear ferris wheel.”
“It’s fabulous!” exclaims Freddie.
“People are going up and around sitting in seats
shaped like footwear.
Who did all this work?”
“All the people who are here today,” says Mr. F.
Freddie and Mr. F rush all around the carnival.
“Everything is made to look like footwear,”
says Freddie.
“This carnival is wonderful!”



Suddenly Freddie stops walking.

"I'm so excited," he says.

"I am forgetting my manners.

Please excuse me, Mr. F.

I have to thank everyone."

Mr. F. watches Freddie talk to one person after another.

Finally Freddie returns to Mr. F.

"Mr. F," he says, "each person told me that everything in the Fantastic Footwear Carnival was your idea.

Everyone said you worked here for five months.

Why did you do all this for me, Mr. F?"



“Freddie, the Fantastic Footwear Carnival is a place where many people will ask you questions. You will always feel important.”

“Mr. F! I finally understand why you were always asking me question after question!

You thought you were making me feel important. You were being a good friend.”

“Doesn’t answering questions make you feel good?” asks Mr. F.

“No,” answers Freddie.

“What makes me feel good is having you for my friend.”



“Mr. F, you helped me understand about friendship.
Friendship is a fantastic feeling,” smiles Freddie.
“Yes, it is,” agrees Mr. F.

